

Llanfihangel Rhydithon Community Council

Serving the community of Dolau, Radnorshire

www.llanrhydithon.wordpress.com

Lynette Lovell
Director of Education
Powys County Council
County Hall
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15th November 2021

Dear Ms Lovell

Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School Consultation

I am writing on behalf of Llanfihangel Rhydithon Community Council to object strongly to the proposed closure of Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School.

The reasons for closure, as stated in the Local Authority's consultation report, are far from accurate and many are misleading. For example, **you note (in bold)**:

Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School has a very high budget share per pupil but your figure of £6304 is incorrect - the correct one is £4939.

It is more difficult to ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged when educated in a combined aged class. What evidence have you got to verify your thinking? We know many local schools organise their pupils successfully into classes of two or more age groups. Therefore, your comment is simply untrue.

Our part-time headship limits the time available to focus on leadership within the school – this comment does not concur with the findings of Estyn in its most recent inspection of our school, nor does it support the shared-headship model you have encouraged in other areas of the county. How does our arrangement give our Headteacher less time to focus on leadership than that experienced by a large school Headteacher who has to spread their time across many classes and staff?

It will be very hard for a two-teacher school to manage the delivery of the new curriculum and its 6 Areas of Learning Experience. We have seen our two teachers implement effectively the current curriculum made up of 7 Foundation Phase and 12 Key Stage 2 subject areas, therefore how are you able to justify saying that it will be very hard for them to manage the delivery of the new curriculum and its 6 Areas of Learning Experience? Your statement is, once again, untrue.

You claim that our pupils will benefit from being able to access a wider range of educational and extra curriculum opportunities. How can this happen since the vast majority of our children, should they be forced to attend another school, have working parents and therefore, they will need to rely on school transport at the end of the school day. This transport will not wait for them to attend a club - if they wish to

attend an extra curriculum opportunity, either their parents will need to ensure alternative transport is provided or else they will miss out. Your comment is yet again untrue.

You have no concerns in relation to quality and standards (of education) offered at Crossgates C.P. School – how do you know? What unbiased information have you seen since the last period of school categorisation to prove Crossgates no longer needs your support?

The Local Authority claim that Crossgates CP School has the capacity to take all current and projected pupils at Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School. Since September, we understand that one of its permanent classrooms is now being used by another PCC school. Thus, the capacity of the school will have been reduced – what is this new capacity figure? Can Crossgates really take in all current and projected Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School pupils given their new capacity figure?

You do not anticipate that additional transport costs would be incurred as a result of the change, it is assumed that the current bus would be used at no additional cost to the Authority. This statement is yet again completely false – there will be a cost but it seems this has not been worked out, why?

Finally, as a Community Council, we have approved various planning applications made by young families wanting to move into the parish to experience its vibrant community and very effective village school. In the past twelve months we have seen a dramatic change in working practices and a huge increase in home and remote working. This is likely to be sustained and increase with more young people seeking to live in rural areas reversing the trend of young families leaving areas like Powys and moving to urban conurbations. In this changing socio economic environment it will be necessary to retain teaching space capacity and not close schools, particularly those that are high performing settings such as Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School.

If you remove our school, then you will be responsible for destroying yet another rural village community – as Llanfihangel Rhydithon CP School is very much the heart of Dolau and the surrounding area.

In conclusion, your closure reasons noted in this response are either completely untrue, misleading or deceptive. We strongly feel that more effort has to be made by your school organisation team to provide truthful and accurate reasons for closure. How can you justify making an irreversible life-changing decision based on such an inaccurate and flawed process?

Llanfihangel Rhydithon Community Council vehemently object to your proposal to close our school, which sits firmly at the 'green heart' of our strong and thriving community.

Yours sincerely
Daniel Price
Clerk/RFO

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